This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

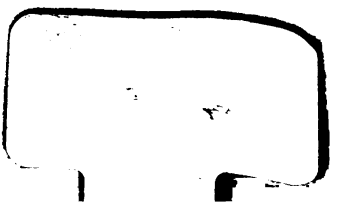
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07583590 4

Poetry, American ...

N.T.S.L.
Hare

Poetry, American



Hare

TOSSED COINS

BY

AMORY HARE

NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY
LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
MCMXXI

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
21097B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1939 L

COPYRIGHT, 1920,
BY JOHN LANE COMPANY

Press of J. J. Little & Ives Company
New York, U. S. A.

In the dark depths of a dog's eyes,
In the far call of a speeding train,
In the dim shapes of seaward-faring ships,
In mastheads fingering the crowded skies,
In lighted windows seen across the plain,
And in the smiles that tremble to your lips,
There is a mystery God made to live
Unsolved, but beautiful, and fugitive.

WOR 19FEB'36

THE author returns thanks for permission to use in this collection of her poems, those which have appeared in The Atlantic Monthly, Harper's Magazine, Contemporary Verse, The Princeton Alumni Weekly and House and Garden.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Tossed Coins 11

JOY O' LIFE

The Meadowlark to the Skylark 15
A Song of Singing 16
Weather 17
Joy o' Life 18
October 19
Wet or Fine 20
My Meadow 21
To a Brown Horse 22
Memory of a Storm 24
Walking at Night 26
The Old Road 28
Seeing 29
Chanticleer 30
Hearing 31
Before Dawn 32
Geraniums and Lilies 33
Cherry Blooms 34
In Youth 35

IN SORROW

Song 39
To My Cousin 40
Gone 42
"Shine!" 43
The Bell 45
Pain 46
The Lover 47
If I Were Dead 49
Prayer 51
My Dead 52
At the Wood's Edge 53

IN SORROW (Continued)

PAGE

Ingratitude 54
At Midnight 55
Dawn 56
The Unconquered 57

QUIETUDE

To My Father 61
A Crown of Bells 62
Reverie 63
Mine 64
Memory 66
Confession 67
April 68
In a Rose Garden 69
Blown Roses 70
Nearness 71
To a Little Girl 72
To a Little Boy 74
The Live Night 76
The Challenge 78
The Nest 79
The Holy Hour 80
After Harvest 81

Tossed Coins

HOW swiftly the bright coins of thought
Come from the busy mint, the brain,
To markets where our lives are bought—
The senses' ease, the spirit's pain.
And one will save, and one will spend,
And one, on meeting with a friend,
Some lesser coin will toss and spin
For chance of what its fall may win.

So I have tossed and spun, and held
The bright coin in my hand, to read
Whether it was a song it spelled
Or those dark fears that sorrows breed.
The elder gods all played at chance—
Thus came adventure and romance.
Our lives are shillings, like as not,
The gods have spun—and then forgot.

NAPL

JOY O' LIFE

IT was not given me
To beat the blue
As you,
Who, from the tufted highland springing,
Soar up with all your being singing
All manner of brave melody.
But on a tree
That stands apart in some loved meadow's slope,
I chant my happy song of common hope,
Glad of the piping that was given me!
Glad of the grasses and the nodding clover,
The crickets' voices and the boom of bees
Blending with birds' cries and slow melodies
Played by the idling brook, where little hooves
Of foals have worn the soft banks into grooves,
Or splashed through shallows as they galloped over.
Sufficient these! All song's a joyous thing,
Be there an ear, or none, to hear me sing.

WHY do I sing? I scarcely like to say—
I hardly know—but certainly today
I thought of you, and afterwards, I think
My heart became a thrush or bobolink;
A bobolink, for choice, because he sings
And soars, the while, on small ecstatic wings.
I know that something swift and delicate
From deep within me was articulate,
And, of a sudden, glad to beat the blue. . . .
I sing, I think, because I thought of You.

SOME tell of the friendships that grow out of books
When the theme is so strangely by each understood,
And speech is not needed while silence and looks
Proclaim the old truth "understanding is good".
But ho! for a dog and the fog on the heather!
The loveliest friend I have wanted is Weather.

Some sing of the comrade so quick to detect
Each change in the mood, every shade, every tense
That colours the mind all alive to reflect
Every beauty and joy, every pain and suspense.
But ho! for a horse and the creak of the leather!
The cleverest friend I have needed is Weather.

Some tell of companions whose pipes glowed and guttered
Beside the old fires that they lit in the past,
Who meet now and then for the jests that are uttered
When men toast the years that are flying so fast.
But ho! for the wind and me, singing together!
The heartiest friend I have proven is Weather.

The jovial flurry of midwinter snow,
The chuckle of rain, or the petulant blast,
The lazy slow smile of the sun dropping low,
Ah, what of the day when I'll leave them at last?
Why ho! for the sky and the moon like a feather!
My soul to my God and the rest to His weather.

GREY skies and tattered clouds
And a long wet road beneath,
And the smell that hangs in autumn
Above the bronzing heath;
With the drenched moors, the tossed trees,
And a little snatch of song,
And the limber, light young body of me
To carry my soul along.

Arched feet strong to lift me
Wherever I'd be going!
A back that's as a young tree
When winds of spring are blowing!
O, the joy of listening ears!
The boon of seeing eyes!
How can I think God gave me this,
My body, to despise?

The muddy face of the wet road,
The little cedar trees,
Look up to thank the sky again,
And my wet face with these:
That I have had the long road,
My little snatch of song,
And the limber, light young body of me
To carry my soul along!

GREY days and cold! The corn tassels shaking,
A wind from the east blowing wet past the lips,
And smell of soaked boughs that the leaves are forsaking,
And mist on the hill where the muddy road dips
Down to the stream, as it eddies and slips
Over the stones with a gurgle and bubble,
There where the cattle have trampled the stubble.

Hear the old cedars! They're singing and sighing!
Sycamores toss their pied arms, and their laughter
Shakes all the air, and the beeches, replying,
Sound like a chime that a prayer follows after.
The wind has gone daft, but the tree-tops are dafter!
Ah, here's a day to put heart into men!
Grey days and cold, and October again!

AS I was on the high-road
That leads to Miller's Run,
I met my lover Barney
Riding in the sun.
He lifted me so tenderly
And sat me on his mare,
And as we sauntered up the hill
He strove to woo me there.

A bonny house had Barney
And many lands he had,
Of all his wealthy family
He was the only lad.
He courted me so grandly
With many a sigh and moan,
Why could I think of nothing
But—"How long his teeth have grown!"

As I was on the high-road
That leads to Somerset,
I met my lover Sandy
Walking through the wet.
He asked me very shyly
If I would walk a way,
And when I asked him why, he said,
"It's such a lovely day."

Then all the beauty of the day
Went tingling through my brain;
The high-road seemed a magic thing,
All muddy in the rain.
And as we panted up the hill
And through the soaking grass,
Why could I think of nothing
But—"What darling eyes he has!"

I'VE a meadow on a mountain, all my own these mellow days,
Just a sunny upland meadow where the dun hill-cattle graze,
With bells upon their mottled necks and sunlight in their eyes,
Making music in my meadow where it dreams against the skies.

There is peace there in my meadow where a man may lie at ease;
There is humour there, and healing, in the twisted little trees;
There is splendour there and beauty, that a man's dim soul may rest;
There is witchery and laughter, there is wonderment and zest!

Let me take you to my meadow where it dreams against the skies;
You'd be lovely in my meadow with your bonny shining eyes,
With the mellow light about you and the joyous sky above.
Ah, we must be in my meadow when I tell you of my love!

TO A BROWN HORSE

IF you were mine I'd come to you at moon-rise
When the deep grass is growing cool and blue,
In the dim fields where sleeping mists will soon rise,
Floating, before the coming of the dew,
And, wondering idly at the look of grass
Under the heavens at this mystic hour,
I'd pull myself a blue-eyed meadow-flower
To place above my ear, before I pass
Under the fence, gigantic in the gloom,
To call soft words to you, as lovers do.
You'd hear, and lift your head, and look me through
With ears cocked up, as who should say, "To whom
Do I thus owe this pleasure?" Then a low
Caressing eager whinny, scarcely heard,
Would come to me, and that most gentle word
Would reach me often as we wander over
To where the brook comes chuckling through the clover.
The moon would pour pale magic from her bowl,
The disc-eyed owl descend without a sound,
The unseen field-mouse hurry to his hole,
The hid cicada drum against the ground;
And all the jovial hurry of the chase
Would fill the mind again with sights and sounds
Of scarlet coat, and merry horn, and pace,
And beat of hoofs, and rioting of hounds!

Alas! The thought of you but brings me pain:
I've only loved you from a passing train!

I HEARD the message pass
The lean beach grass;
I saw the whirling sand
Warning the land;
The worn pines on the hill
Tossed, and were still,
Fearful of what they heard
In that swift word.

The east-wind leapt and cried
That day had died;
The gentle face of day
Grew stark and grey,
And all the wind-struck night
The sea grew white,
Weaving of foam and cloud
The dead day's shroud.

Out of the darkling gale
The dawn came pale;
The ground-swell lashed the sand
Along the land,
And gulls blew down the sky
With smothered cry,
Beaten and blown away
Like spume and spray.

Then, in a sudden lull,
A battered gull
Called that the storm was spent,
The promise sent.
Forlornly, in reply,
The sound went by
Of some sea-weary bell
Riding the swell.

Yet something mild and fair
Scented the air,
Blending a landward breeze
With salt of seas;
The old pines on the shore,
Ceasing their roar,
Yearned upwards towards the sky
With a slow sigh.

After the wind and rain
Came sun again
With amber afternoon;
And then the moon
Climbed the dim stair of night
To dawn's delight.
A single shattered mast
Showed where a storm had passed.

MY face is wet with the rain
But my heart is warm to the core,
For I follow at will again
The road that I loved of yore,
And the dim trees beat the dark,
And the swelling ditches moan;
With the joy of the singing, soaring lark
I follow the road alone.

Alone in the living night
Away from the babble of tongues,
Alone with the old delight
Of the night wind in my lungs,
And the wet air on my cheeks
And the warm blood in my veins,
Alone with the joy he knows who seeks
The thresh of the young Spring rains,
With the smell of the pelted earth,
The tearful drip of the trees,
Making him dream of the sound of mirth
That comes with the clearing breeze.

'Tis a rare and wondrous sight
To walk in the wet a while,
And see the slow delight
Of the sun's first pallid smile,
And watch the meadows breathe again
And the far woods turn to green,
Drunk with the beauty of wind and rain
And the sun's warm smile between!

I have made me a vagrant song,
For my heart is warm to the core.
And I'm glad, Ah! glad that the night is long,
For I follow the road once more.
And the dim trees beat the dark,
And the swelling ditches moan;
With the joy of the singing, soaring lark
I travel the road, alone.

ROAD like a vein,
Tell me, where will you take me
Beyond the broad plain?
Will you mend me and make me
The merry-eyed, cherry-lipped gypsy again,
Who followed your turning
Through the jovial patter of rain
Or the sun's ruddy burning?

Will you give me your cloud-mottled hills
Where the wheat nods and billows;
The brook that a shallow pool stills
At the feet of the willows;
The meadows that quiver and dance
With the music of bees;
Or the shadows that hover and glance
To the laughter of trees?

Will you give me the longing for home
When the dark comes to daunt me;
The urge to go forward and roam
When the moon comes to haunt me?
The ricks in the gloom by the barn
And the smell of the cattle,
The carters that pause for a yarn
Or go by with a rattle;
The hail and the halt, the goodwill
That they toss to the stranger;
The keen stabbing joy of the thrill
At the coming of danger?

Road like a warm living vein,
Tell me, where will you take me
Beyond the broad plain?
Will you mend me and make me
The merry-eyed, cherry-lipped gypsy again?

YOU who have eyes, you do not know the sky
As I, who, restless-memoried, recall
The tender majesty of clouds and all
The slow remote tranquillity on high.
For I may feel the moon come round the hill,
And smell the summer's cool platoons of rain
Ride down the valley, making fresh again
The bayonets of green that dust would kill—
The soft musk-smelling dust of little roads
Out-flung beneath the sun, and mottled all
With shadows, where the hay-carts with their loads
Pass by, exhaling spicery, and let fall
Small wisps that blend their sweetness with the dust.
No hour but must
Share its deep self with me: for I'm atune
To every wandering loveliness of June,
Each thundering threat of Frost, imperious.
All's an adventure, all's mysterious
And full of wonder. Twice ten thousand harps
Sing in the winter winds that cry to me;
Guessed beauty seeks my zealous memory;
The very crickets fiddle flats and sharps!
Who's blind? I'll swear it's not this fellow! Never!
I, who was blind, have found my sight forever.

WHAT can wake the little cock
Every midnight, by the clock?
Is it just coincidence,
Or some freak of Providence,
Tickling then the hidden ear
Of the lordly chanticleer?
Sometimes in the bitter dark
When the village mongrels bark,
And the wind seems wickedly
Torturing each shrub and tree,
Nosing all along the ground
Like some hunger-driven hound,
Till I wake and, eerily,
Hear him baying, drearily,
Gallantly my little cock
Crows to say its twelve o'clock.
In the darkness, bleak and dim,
All his neighbours answer him.
And that small audacious sound
Seems to ease the aching ground,
Seems to make the worn trees sigh
"Soon the dawn will mount the sky,"
And so strangely comforts me
That I bless him, sleepily.

WHAT if we made our senses so astute,
Our minds so quick, our hearing so acute,
That we could hear
The infinitesimal sound
That seeds must make in falling to the ground
At turning of the year?
What if we heard
The breathing of a bird,
The tapping of the black ant's little feet,
The brown snail tracing out a silver street?
Perhaps more kind, and so more swiftly wise,
We'd apprehend tears welling in the eyes
We love the most, and so could speak the word
To dry, or send them falling through a smile,
In just a little while.
I think all tears that fell at happy times
Might make a little pattering sound of chimes.

IN this last hour before the dawn
The Milky Way's a vast bazaar
Where wealth of stars is bought and sold,
And planets, wandering from afar,
Buy peacock plumes and cloth of gold,
While Pleiads bring their pearls to pawn.

Translucent silks, as black as night,
And scarves that might have hid the Moon
When from the passionate sea she fled away;
Bejewelled sword and musketoon,
And frail stringed instruments, that play
For flashing ankles swift delight,

Are heaped with ivory and jade
And old wrought silver diadems
Mid fans and shoes; and stomachers,
Encrusted with a thousand gems,
Flung down mid pelts of silken furs—
Ah, brief the hour and swift the trade!

I think I must have been a star
At that celestial bazaar!

SAUCY red geraniums, nodding on the window-sill,
Brown pots in a row beneath the thick green leaves,
Symbolizing all the things that come with country cottages,
Candle-light and little rooms beneath the drooping eves.

Stately calla lily blooms, gleaming through the window-
pane,
Gazing on the avenue with half averted faces,
Posing in a silver vase against the heavy tapestries,
Blending with the sombre rugs, the paintings and the laces.

THERE are moments, there are hours
As I bend above my flowers,
Counting little lifted faces
In the sunny sheltered places,

When I seem to catch a gleam
Of the dim eternal dream,
Dreamed by greenly growing things
In innumerable Springs.

There are moments when I feel
All their exquisite appeal,
There are hours when I know
Why the poppies bleed and blow;

When the velvet-bellied bee
Is a thing of mystery,
And the pigment of the rose
Is a secret no one knows.

In the moonlight by the wall,
Yester-eve, I watched the fall
Of the cherry blooms that blow
In a softly scented snow;

And I wondered if the gift
Of that faintly fragrant drift
Was the petals' joy in darting,
Or the old tree's grief at parting.

GOD, if I pray not yet to Thee
With pious eyes and sacred phrase,
While thus my heart sings down the days
That Thou hast set aside for me—

Forgive me, Master of us all;
The earth Thou gavest little men
Has caught me to its heart again,
And all my being is in thrall.

Beyond the dreaming purple hills
The sunny, silent meadows sleep,
And hurried little waters leap
And laugh, with murmurings and trills.

And all day long, O God, the sky
Has loosed its ships, until a fleet
Of iridescent squadrons meet,
Manœuvring in majesty.

The stars have faded one by one,
And now a little sleepy bird
The whisper of the dawn has heard,
And hails the coming of the sun.

Ah, God! When grief with visage cold
Shall walk with me and blind my eyes
To all this glory of the skies—
Then will I speak those phrases old.

Like a cathedral's altar-steps,
Worn smooth by countless reverent feet—
Those ancient words so smoothly sweet
Were made by countless vanished lips.

I am too joyous now to fear,
Too humbly happy to repent,
Too dumbly grateful I was sent
To live among the others here.

IN SORROW

MY Love was born when stars were dancing,
The tide was high and the moon was full,
The surf was white and the sea-gulls glancing;
So bright was she, and beautiful.

My Love was named when trees were tossing,
When brooks ran, singing, towards the sea,
And brown trout leapt by the stony crossing;
So slim and swift and glad was she.

My Love was wed when the spring was young,
When the western sky was a painted splendour,
And the crescent moon by a thread was hung;
So sweet was she, so wise and tender.

My Love was buried when snow was deep,
And the moon sailed over the ghostly hill,
And I feared to stir, and I dared not weep;
So mute was she, so white and still.

TO MY COUSIN

YOU who seemed winged even when a lad,
With that swift look of those who know the sky,
It was no blundering Fate who stooped and bade
You break your wings and fall to earth and die.
I think one day you may have flown too high,
So that Immortals saw you and were glad,
Watching the beauty of your spirit's flame
Until they loved and called you. . . . And you came.

THERE is no beauty here, nor loveliness;
No song, nor evening hour of holiness;
No look of laughter in the bending skies;
No mirthful gentleness in human eyes.

Gone is the magic from the little bird
Beneath the eaves, whose nesting-song we heard;
The new-sprung grass beside the meadow brook
Has lost its freshness and its wondering look,

The star-eyed beauty that it used to hold
Before the Spring had lived to grow so old,
Before the days were ended with the dawn—
Long, long ago, before my Love was gone.

WAN of de boot-black on de ferra-boat,
I wacha de beeg crowd goin' back an' fort',
And a queekly count de feet dat might be wort'
A leetla dime for mek dem shiny coat.

Great many feet I watcha een a day!
Wan vera leetla shoes I have-a shine',
Wit' holes een toes dat should have been een fine
Warm boots, de owner was so vera gay,

So vera sweet to look at een de eyes!
I lak to shine dos leetla toes for her.
Wan day I see a man, dressed lak chauffeur,
And leetla lady looka at de skies

And tak de han's; I look de odder way,
And all de night I teenk of leetla wan,
She have look up so loveeng een de sun,
And not care what de beega crowd might say.

And een de morn' when ferra-boat eet start
I shine for her de leetla shabby toes,
And she say, "Tony" (red-a lak a rose),
"Shine beeg today, for I hava geev' my heart,

And when I come tonight, my leetla frien',
I show you someteeng on dees lefta han'.
He ees so fine a man, so vera gran'!
I shan' be on dees ferra-boat again!"

But when de night eet come, she come alone
An' creep into de dark behin' de stair,
An' when I pass I see her crying dere,
And when I spik she give me leetla moan.

Poor leetla wan! Poor laugheeng leetla rose!
I watch de many feet dat pattera past,
And count de faces hurryeeng so fast—
But never see dos shabby leetla toes!

FOUR and twenty separate times
Followed by a run of chimes,
The bell has struck the hour
From the coral-tinted tower;
Measuring impartially,
In its grave unhurried way,
Each swift hour when, yesterday,
Seeing You was ecstasy,
As it measures hours that crawl
Broken-winged, now You are dead,
With the candles at Your head
Making shadows on the wall.

Four and twenty separate times,
Followed by a run of chimes,
The bronze bell struck the hour
From the coral-tinted tower.

SURELY, from out this agony of mind
Some good thing shall be born;
Some beautiful slow thought become an act
As children come to manhood, so to find
Justification for the piteous and worn
Faces of women who once gave them birth.
Now this strange pain's too wide to be exact,
Too cold and heavy, like a winter tide
Flooding the fields that once were warm and green
And ringing with the spoken joy of birds
When Noon danced in his tunic, shadow-pied.
Never words,
Only the cool unhurried hands of Time
Can make me gentle surgery. An hour
Will fall upon an hour, until a day
Has passed, and cadenced like a rhyme,
The days will dawn and die and come to flower
Over and over, till the measured play
Of loveliness laid upon sorrow's smart
Obliterates the aching of the heart,
And one may use a memory of grief
To bring another traveller relief.

DEATH walks in houses, secretly, by night.
From room to room he gravely moves, appraising,
Seeing at a glance who bends before his might,
Stirring uneasily before his gazing
Even in sleep.
These he will keep,
From others turn away
As an old father bids his children play
A little longer on the spacious lawn,
Musing on how the coming of the dark
Will drive them to his knees
For comfort and for sleep before the Dawn.
I think that these
Wear in their eyes some mystic secret mark
That holds his fancy, as a bright fish gives
Pleasure to watching eyes the while it lives,
But dead holds nothing of its quick delight.
Unwillingly, I think, Death reaps the swift,
Brave, daring children who in beauty move,
Careless of life and prodigal of love,
And, like a plaything, tossing heaven's gift
Of Living 'twixt themselves and Death himself,
Setting such store by brief and earthly pelf,
And turning joys
To toys.

Yet at the door of some he stops to smile,
And bathe his troubled eyes and smoothe his hair
As boys do who have waited thus awhile;
In eagerness he waits and listens there.
Then, feeling for his gift, he sheds the rôle
Of the observing beggar, asking dole,
Who, when refused, took with swift angry power
All that was fair and free within the hour:
He lifts the latch and softly enters in,
Flinging away the sordid rags that cover
The pity in his visage, brow to chin;
And claims his own, as a long waited lover.

IF I were dead I would not miss
The things that were my deeper bliss;
I should be far too well at rest
For burning thoughts to fill my breast;
There, in the silence of the grave,
Content with what such stillness gave,
No yearning should disturb my will;
Yet, when the Spring ran through the hill,
Haply the wandering scent of her
Some consciousness in me might stir,
And with the blind root's will I might
Grope back, remembering, towards the light.

Ah, God! To walk the world again
When all the fields are sweet with rain;
To come again, when dusk is falling,
And hear the tree-toads' drowsy calling;
To wander through the tufted clover
When Humble Bee's a busy lover,
Or stumble on some little grove
My loneliness had made me love.
To wear a cool green summer frock,
To hear the busy kitchen clock
Tick, while the house is dark and still,
And vine leaves at the window-sill
Whisper a small word to the grass
When desultory breezes pass.
Above a tea-cup's brim to gaze
At slow smoke rising through the blaze,
Or meet, perhaps, the friendly look
Of eyes just lifted from a book.

To see the tidy little towns
Tucked in, content, beneath the downs,
To ride a long day, straight and hard,
And come at dusk to stable-yard,
Hearing the great beasts in the stalls
Stamp, or rub softly 'gainst the walls,
Or blow the dust from out the grain—
Ah! God! To know these things again.

I HAVE begged heaven as blindly as a child,
As children weep and cling about the knees
Of those they trust, holding them fearfully;
I have besought the swarming Pleiades,
I have plead humbly before Venus mild,
And promised proud Polaris, tearfully,
All promises stars might exact from men.
The Constellations pass without a sign,
Too beautiful and far to answer me.
Ah, I will make my prayers to God again!
"God, of Thy bounty, limitless, divine,
Lean from the skies and see my agony."

I heard the garden owl below me cry,
And then a star fell slowly down the sky.

FROM gazing on my dead I have come here
Into the meadow. The cool green of even
Is starred with flowers that may have dropped from heaven
In those old days when thought of me was dear,
When the brief sound that is my name held grace,
Lived and sent colour surging to your face.

My dead lie very still, nor hope to rise
And tread some path, renewing youth again,
For my dead's lives were lived so much in vain,
No resurrection, merciful and wise,
May bid a second Spring pipe them awake.
For these the names of those who are my dead:
"Trust," past belief; "Youth," tossing a glad head;
"Love," hasting to give all, for giving's sake.

STARK and fantastic in their mutilation
The tree-trunks stand against the evening sky,
Shell-split and shrapnel-shattered.
No voice is theirs; silence and desolation
In death walk here; the great guns have gone by,
The embers of the farrier's fires are scattered,
A myriad iron heels have stamped them out.
Only a little dripping sound there is,
As though the prostrate earth was bleeding, maimed,
Pocked, as though pestilence had been about.
Dusk never fell so pitiful as this
On outraged trees, too dead to be ashamed.
This is the little wood where such elation
Rippled along the sky-line in the Spring,
Each tree a dancer swaying
To the hummed tune of April's revelation;
This is the place where such a quivering
Of slim green fingers fluttered in the Maying.
There are the fields that bore the purple clover
Tuned, like a cello, to the hum of bees,
The patient fields that fed the tasselled corn,
Or was it wheat that, as the wind ran over,
Streamed, like a banner rippling in the breeze,
When mild-eyed cows passed, lowing, in the morn?
Where serried grain and tuneful clover stood,
A sturdy forest of tired impassioned men
Went down to death, at the toss of a bloody cap.
Now they and the fields and the desolated wood,
Ploughed back into all-enduring earth again,
Rest . . . till the next great rising of the sap.

THE night held only wretchedness and coldness,
Dampness and dreariness and dismal drip
Of rain that darkness seemed to lend a boldness.
A leaf blew up and clung against my lip,
Making me shudder as I plucked it off.
The narrow road stretched forward, like a trough
Of mud that stamping hoofs have lately mired
And broken in the night.
My hands were wet and cold, and I was tired,
And thought of how my little bed was white
And clean, with harsh sheets cool and dry,
And how my window framed a patch of sky.
I longed to lie there, and I had my wish.
But, after many weeks, the quiet room
Seemed blank; its ceiling an inverted dish
Set there to vex me in the scentless gloom.
And then I thought of how the living dark,
Outside, had whispered in the shimmering wet,
Talking of strange things that are grim and stark,
Expressing moods the shifting winds beget.
I hungered for the wet road's pungent reek,
The weirdness of the trees in their carouse,
The freshness beating past against my cheek,
The swift exhilaration storms arouse.
And all night long I dreamed I felt the rain
Beating against my face and hands again!

AH, I must rest, for all my being droops
As though in some dark wine it was immersed.
Darkness, be kind and, as a mother stoops,
Stoop thou to me and cool my spirit's thirst.
Let me lie quietly, while wandering airs
Search the broad brooding night for tired eyes,
Eyes without tears, such weariness is theirs;
Let me be hidden till the moon shall rise;

For I must watch her white serene ascent
Tracing a course on heaven's canopy,
Till, drowsing in the west, her beauty spent,
Some memory of her peace sends peace to me.
Time, bathe my tired feet; Earth, let me stay
A while against thy knees to watch the skies,
So, at the dawn I go to meet the day
With the old love and laughter in my eyes.

I KNEW that it was Noon, because the shade
Contracted beneath trees that never stirred,
But indolently mused without a word.
I knew the Evening, for her coming made
A myriad perfumes, wandering voyageurs
That fared from field and brier-patch and glade,
Telling the world what loveliness is hers.
I knew the Night, because the pointed firs
Were blue against the stars; and all the flowers
Within my garden slept and slept for hours—
Except Nicotiana who demurs,
Mistrusts the darkness and keeps broad awake,
Lifting a white face, timorous and wan.
But, most of all, I knew when it was Dawn,
Dawn in my heart—the dawn that made it break.

I NEVER hear the thrush's mellow flute
In the hushed gloom of woods, where threads of sun
From tree-trunk to tall tree-trunk, one by one,
Move in slow beauty, eloquently mute;
Nor watch dark skies, swept by the trembling tops
Of poplars bowing to the evening breeze,
Nor tread the tufted grass the heifer crops,
Nor feel the fog blow past me from the seas,
Without that leap of blood, that catch of breath,
Coming to strike me dumb at thought of Death.

Death, the strange dream beyond all thought withdrawn,
Incredibly beyond compassion's sting;
Deaf to all grief, immune to pitying;
Ultimate conqueror of beauty's dawn,
That saw the myriad seeds of eager life
Willing themselves to growth, and rapturous
Content in being! Brief, but beauteous,
The conflict, glorious the strife
That takes such joy of living for a span,
Knowing the verdict before Time began.
Splendid to have been one of those who fought
To be, defying Death in every beat
Of a full-pulsing heart; to drink the sweet
Dark wine of ecstasy, the milk of thought,
Until such pageantry of the Unseen
Comes to reality within the mind
That the blind heart can consolation find
In heaven and hell and all that lies between,
And comes to think on Death as the indenture
That binds the deathless will to new adventure.

QUIETUDE

THE night that I was dying,
The little winds of heaven
Came whimpering and crying
And whining at my door;
A pale sun rose at seven,
A bitter dawn defying—
I dreamed that I was lying
Upon a misty shore,
Where all was dark behind me,
And shadows slipped before me,
And tides nosed up to find me,
And grey gulls hovered round:
I only thought them kindly
To voice my sorrow for me,
And oh! but I was grateful for my body's length of ground.
No wish save to be sleeping,
A little while to rest me,
My lovely silence keeping
While beauty wandered by:
Then came a sound of weeping,
And someone stooped to bless me,
Crying out to God in heaven that he could not let me die.
Then as I lay in wonder,
Too spent for any protest,
Cool hands were quick to sunder
The fetters round my brain:
The hands I seemed to know best
My tired head came under,
And lifted me, and helped me
To live and laugh again.

TO think of you is to become serene,
And instantly so gay that something swells
Like music in the heart. You must have been
Somewhere a minstrel, bringing smiles to kings;
You seem to wear a crown of little bells
That hold such happy laughter in their ringing
They set all other hearts to cheery singing.

How can I tell how greatly in your debt
I know myself to be? I always knew
Beauty could not be bargained for, and yet
Beauty comes quietly to me from you.
How bought? For what exchanged? I never know;
I only thank you that you bless me so.

IT is so still here in the dusky wood.
Only the moths have motion when they spin
And flutter through the dark.
There, in the deeper dusk, the cedars brood.
No warmth of fields, no voice of meadow-lark
Floats here—no breeze may wander in
So deep to bear me company.
I, who am so companioned in a field,
Am lonely here and rather sleepily afraid.
Just now some little beast has squealed
And made me creep, so that I wonder why
I come here to wood at dusk of day
After the glow has faded from the sky.

Once, at this hour, I saw you pass this way.

THIS day is mine; and I have wandered far,
Bent on beholding what it is I own.
Each slow unfolding hour has priceless grown,
And I am covetous of every star.

The smell of hay and daisies is entwined
Upon the heavy summer-scented air,
And 'mid the mellow silence, lingering there,
Replete young Noonday, drowsing, lies enshrined.

Here will I rest where faintly comes the sound
Of fir trees, murmurous as running seas,
Where, in a breath, the fragrance of the trees
Is born and dies amid a peace profound.

And now, where slumbrous Noonday lay at ease,
Pale Evening trails her gown of filmy grey,
Lighting the dim brief moments of her stay
With one clear candle, low among the trees.

As spreads the peacock wide its gaudy train,
Night spreads her stars and all her subtle snares.
She knows her power and, knowing it, she dares
Bewitch, when all but she would think 'twere vain:

Bedecked with gems her beauty to enhance,
She weaves a slow enchantment o'er the earth,
As with a look, half sorrow and half mirth,
She bids the starry hosts of heaven to dance.

It seems that this cool sentient world of night
Shall never change to brilliant Day again—
That time has reached the last link of the chain,
And frightened Earth must ever wait the Light.

Yet, as I watch, the caravan of stars
Creeps out, slow moving, on its westward way,
And, in the East, the legions of the day
March up the sky with flashing scimitars.

I know not whether I shall lift my eyes
Unto the heavens, or bend them to the grass;
I cannot pray, I cannot sing, alas!
And yet before these wonders of the skies

Some spirit in me leaps to bend the knee
In utter gratitude, and love and praise,
For all the wondrous beauty of the days
That God has given to earth—and given to me.

ALL green and gold the hours went by today;
They seemed like little leaves that, one by one,
Bloomed on the tree of Time, and in the sun
Curled slowly from the stem and fell away.

Such strange slow grace was caught in their descending,
I strove to learn it in a lovely rhyme
That I might murmur over in the time
When in the earth I, too, should make an ending.

I learned the silver-bladed summer rain,
The gloom of pines, the shimmering of heat,
The shadows and the dimpling in the wheat,
Remembering each to make it mine again;

But such oblivion held me when I slept
That, when I woke, I had forgot the half,
Remembering but these: your merry laugh,
And tears I kissed one evening when you wept.

PART of a dream I told,
But all I did not tell,
I might not say it well
Lest it seem bold
In the bare light of common afternoon.
Yet once, before I slept, I watched the moon
Dimming the stars with her bright visage. Only,
Just as I turned to sleep, I thought her lonely,
And thinking this, I straightway thought of you.
Then, as I slept, I dreamed that One you knew
(And love to bless in memory yet more greatly)
Leaned from the heavens, and graciously, sedately,
Gave me a thing I was to give to you.
It was from Her, you were to understand. . . .
Obedient, in my dream, I kissed your hand.

ALL night, the chimney muttering and moaning,
All night, a mad wind blowing from the north,
Flaying the trees and setting branches groaning,
Blighting the buds that April signalled forth,
Poor little green things, eager for the Maying,
Called by the urge of life to their betraying.

If in my heart, as in the hidden earth,
Small roots, awaking, blossom in the mind,
Seeking the light for need of sun and mirth,
Pray that the Power who called them may be kind,
Pray that their season be a quiet Spring—
A time so brief should be a gentle thing.

I SOMETIMES wonder if the roses grow
Faint-hearted in the blinding summer sun,
Waiting the slow, unerring hand of time,
The grief of petals falling one by one.

I wonder if they envy dandelions
Who spring to deepest being in a day,
And who, as little stars, come down from heaven,
So riotously bloom and haste away.

I thought a frail rose murmured low today,—
"Ah! when the first brief fragrancy is gone,
To be dispersed upon the flying breeze,
Whirled with a song into oblivion!"

WHAT does it matter that the time must come
When all my petals shall be blown away,
Leaving a brittle stalk where wild bees hum
And woo the living flowers all the day?
I, too, have trembled to the kiss they brought,
Was wooed and knew the sunlight and the dew;
I, too, have quivered to the living thought,
Have bent and swayed the teeming summer through;
These have been mine unto the uttermost,
And peradventure shall be mine again
When some new shell becomes my spirit's host;
Life, beautiful as this, shall fill me then,
And strange new thoughts may grace another Spring,
Making existence seem a deeper thing.

TO one I love
I have been all things beautiful.
I am the stars, the light, the breath,
The music of the world set forth for him;
And I am witchery, and even woe,
Woe of a quality akin to joy!
The thought of me is subtly intertwined
With twilight and the wheeling swallows' cry,
With doorways dimly lit; and darkening fields;
The long road's ending, and the lantern's gleam;
With huddled roofs adream beneath the moon.
For I am that by which he is reborn.
The dearness of the heart by candle-light;
The mystery wherein two spirits blend;
I have the strange remoteness of the heavens
And yet the patient nearness of the grass.

TO A LITTLE GIRL

HERE in this darkened room, as daylight goes,
I bend above the sheltered little bed,
And watch the outline of the small dark head,
Touched with the beauty of a child's repose.
Dim little soul! what wonder yet to be!
Frail body, what a miracle your part!
Pray God the one who comes to claim your heart
Be worthy of your pain and ecstasy.
Strange that these tiny hands shall tend one day
Another, who shall know the earth through you;
Strange that these lips, that sorrow never knew,
Shall, one day, teach another soul to pray!

TO A LITTLE BOY

YOU will not know
With what delight she learned of you,
Nor with what wonder
She bent above you when you came,
And touched your crumpled hands
With love and fear, dimly aware
Of all that, strangely soon, would come to pass.
You will not guess
How often, in the winter night, she rose
And, through the chill deep dark,
Crept, groping, to your bed.
Nor how, with little ministrations born of love,
Through all the changing days of all the years
That you were hers,
She served you like a king, with what delight,
What wondering despair!
You will not know these things,
Nor how it was when first she saw
With smiles (a little wistfully, perhaps)
The warm bloom leave her cheeks,
And woke one day
To see the small grim shadows that had crept
Beneath her eyes,
Making them look so mother-wise
But old.
And when her hope and care, her faith and love,
Her strength and high resolve have wrought for you
The clean straight-shouldered manhood that she dreamed
When in the sentient darkness first you stirred;
Then beauty, life, mischance and passion swift,
All interwoven in a potent web,
May overthrow her heart's slow work of years
And bring it all to naught within a day,
Because you cannot know.

I AM very near to the world tonight.
I could take the darkness in my hands,
As one would take the waters of a spring,
And hold it against my face.
I am only a firefly, the creature of a season,
But tonight God has given me faith in my frail wings
And I am flashing and soaring
Before the vision of another being;
Floating in dark space
Against the enduring stars.

The early white lilac bush
Trembled as I stood a moment, listening.
And I heard the wind speak
And pass on, and the little soft leaves
Making gentle response. And I wondered.
And then I forgot to guess,
For there came a sigh, as of content.
From one of those white blossoms,
And fragrance drifted by me through the darkness,
Fragrance like music floating down the wind.

And then the moon came and turned the grass to a greyness
Stretching down the hill, soft as meadow-mist,
So that as I moved I felt no contact
With its smooth surface;
I seemed to pass over as the wind had gone,
Singing as the wind sang,
There in the wide hushed fields.

O Night, in which I have heard the voices
Of little leaping brooks not far from me!
O Darkness, in which I have watched the faces
Of tiny warm white flowers, tremulous!
Live in my heart again
When youth's torch lies in the roadway,
Stamped out by the shuffling feet
Of passing years.

LOVE, I will lift your gauntlet from the dust
And gird myself with courage, lest despair
Cheat me of all things beautiful and deep.
Better to live, awake, than dream, asleep;
And if Ill-Fortune waits my bed to share,
Better to meet her, since the meeting must
Be soon or late. Chance lies with those who dare.
For then, if days remain alive for me—
All splashed with colour—or my spirit's lamp
Burns down so low that things I knew and loved
Are only shadows, sodden things and damp,
Where pageantry of thought and feeling moved
Or danced to measures of strange harmony,
I shall be proud and glad I did not pass
And leave the circle where Love's gauntlet lay.
But I shall wonder who, or what, it was
That threw it there and bade me pass that way,
And why of all the worthy souls more fit
Than I, 'twas I who dared and lifted it.

WHEN the leaves danced and all the trees were swaying,
Drowsy with happiness,
For that the sun their lover was, all through the merry Maying,
I did not guess
That love had builded wisely in the beeches,
Brought the old miracle of life to birth
There where the apex of the tree's crown reaches
Skies that were tender with the summer's mirth.

It was not till frost visited the trees
One bitter night
Of winds that shook with fearful ecstasies:
The leaves took flight
And showed the trim nest cleaving to the branch,
Braving the tempest that ran past with jeers;
So small a thing, it seemed, to be so staunch!
Sight of it there made laughter quick with tears.

So, in my world, when winter buried it
And bitter darkness fell,
There came a dawn, dim, dreamy, and snow-lit,
Showing the place where Friendship builded well,
Where happy thoughts were quick like little birds
Busy with mating and the joy of bringing
Their like to birth: when silences were words,
And every heart-beat was a sort of singing.

21097B

BY my window, on my knees,
I watched the planets turning.
I could feel the upward yearning
Of the little cedar trees.
In the silence of the dim
Twilight before dawn,
When the night was almost gone,
Like drowsy cherubim,
Clouds floated up and sailed
The blushing sky, and smiled,
All rosy like a child,
Then drew away and paled.
So passed the holy hour
When dawn, by darkness wooed,
At heaven's portal stood,
And morning came to flower.

DAWN broke today, a sodden beaten thing,
Old and forlorn and wet with tears of grief,
As though some secret violence had befallen,
Leaving Day dumb, heart-broken, quivering.
The hush of death held every flower and leaf,
Only the brooks ran turbulent and swollen.
And, strangely, in long silences that hung
Upon the air, void as a tongueless bell,
A leaf would fall, sedately and alone,
Stripped from the vibrant bough where it had clung
By some stray wind from whence no one could tell,
Drifting unhurriedly to the Unknown,
Much as old dear beliefs will fall at last
Yellowed by time, tear-wet, yet still believing.
Hour after hour leaves floated down, forlorn,
And all the trees seemed dreaming of the past,
So that one could not tell if they were grieving
For beauty missed or beauty they had borne.
And presently, like drops from some heart's blood,
The slow red leaves came dripping through the air,
The smell of death, decay and soaking mud
Went floating past and settled everywhere:
The very pulses slowed, for nothing moved;
All was so old, exhausted and unloved.
Then from the stubble, swiftly, without sound,
A late lark soared and dived and disappeared:
And all was changed—the seamed and wrinkled ground
Became an old face memory has endeared;
A clownish wind leapt up, and in a trice
The sober trees with gusty laughter shook;
The fallen leaves ran past like little mice;
A patch of ragged blue shone in the brook;
And in the blind and darkened soul of me,
Brightly as flags, my thoughts flew gallantly.

THE END